

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 300492

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 300492

EXDIS

FOL REPEAT PORT OF SPAIN 2925 SENT ACTION SECSTATE
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C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT OF SPAIN 2925

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, ETRD, TD
SUBJECT: SUGGESTIONS FOR BETTERING RELATIONS WITH
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

REF: STATE 282526

1. TWO TRADE ISSUES OF CONSIDERABLE INTEREST TO TRINIDAD
AND TOBAGO WOULD APPEAR SUSCEPTIBLE TO REASONABLE SOLUTIONS:

2. OF ITEMS ON GSP LIST OF INTEREST TO TRINIDAD AND
TOBAGO, TSUS NO. 16815 (NON-BEVERAGE BITTERS) RANKED
FIFTH IN IMPORTANCE FOR THIS COUNTRY OF ALL GSP ITEMS IN
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PAGE 02 STATE 300492

TERMS OF 1974 TRADE VALUE. SPECIFIC PRODUCT INVOLVED IS

ANGOSTURA BITTERS, WORLD-RENOWNED AS PRODUCT SOLEY OF TRINIDAD. HOWEVER, WE WERE SURPRISED TO FIND THAT THIS ITEM EXCLUDED FOR TRINIDAD UNDER COMPETITIVE NEED FORMULA SINCE T&T OBVIOUSLY PROVIDES MORE THAN TRIGGER 50 PER CENT OF ALL SUCH U.S.IMPORTS. THIS EXCLUSION OF BITTERS WILL BECOME KNOWN TO GOTT WITHIN NEXT 24 HOURS AS WE SUPPLY THEM WITH DETAILS OF GSP ENACTMENT. I ANTICIPATE STRONG REACTION ON BASIS ARGUMENT THAT ANGOSTURA BITTERS SHOULD CLEARLY HAVE BEEN INCLUDED BY ITC IN CATEGORY OF ITEMS FOR WHICH NO LIKE OR DIRECTLY COMPETITIVE PRODUCT IS PRODUCED IN U.S.A. I RECOMMEND REVIEW IF FEASIBLE TO DETERMINE WHETHER THIS RULING IN FACT WOULD NOT BE APPROPRIATE. I AM UNAWARE OF ANY DIRECTLY COMPETITIVE PRODUCT TO ANGOSTURA BITTERS, EITHER PRODUCED IN U.S. OR ELSEWHERE ABROAD. IN FACT, I AM REMINDED OF FEATURE STROY IN AUGUST WASHINGTONIAN MAGAZINE JUST RECEIVED HERE WHICH ASKS WHAT IS SLE COUNTRY WHICH PRODUCES ANGOSTURA BITTERS. ANSWER GIVEN WAS OF COURSE TRINIDAD. WHILE THIS MAY SEEM SMALL ISSUE, ANGOSTURA BITTERS IS A PRESTIGE "FLAG" PRODUCT OF TRINIDAD AND EXPORTERS HERE HOPE TO EXPAND CONSUMPTION IN U.S. IF PRICE THERE CAN BE REDUCED THROUGH ELIMINATION OF DUTY. EXPANSION OF EXPORTS TO U.S. IS THEREFORE NOT RELATED TO BEATING OUT COMPETITION, WHICH FROM TRADE STANDPOINT IS NONEXISTENT, BUT SIMPLY GEARING PROMOTIONAL CAMPAIGN TO PROSPECT FOR PRODUCT TO BE LESS EXPENSIVE TO CONSUMER THAN IS NOW THE CASE.

3. AN ACTION BY USG WHICH WOULD HAVE STRONG FAVORABLE JWSWFBZEWIIBRQMRLZND TOBAGO WOULD BE TO REDUCE IMPORT DUTY ON RUM TO LEVEL COMPARABLE WITH OTHER MAJOR DISTILLED SPIRIT IMPORTS. CURRENTLY, U.S. RUM DUTY IS 243 PER CENT OF DUTY ON SCOTCH WHISKY AND 187 PER CENT OF DUTY ON CANADIAN WISKY. THIS WEST INDIES RUM AND SPIRITS ASSOCIATION HAS MADE A SUBMISSION MOST RECENTLY IN AUGUST 1975 TO THE ITC REGARDING THIS ISSUE (SEE POS 2308 SEPT 75). I UNDERSTAND IT IS POSSIBLE THIS WILL BE NEGOTIATED UNDER MTN IN GENEVA. IF POSSIBLE TO DEAL WITH THIS ISSUE SEPARATELY AND AT A TIME MOST CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 STATE 300492

BENEFICIAL TO THE USG, IT COULD BE AN IMPORTANT REWARD APPROPRIATELY FOLLOWING SOME GOTT ACTION OF PARTICULAR SIGNIFICANCE TO US SUCH AS DIRECT AND OPEN SUPPORT IN UN COMMITTEE OF 24 ON PUERTO RICO ISSUE. WHILE NOT SUGGESTING WE MAKE A ONE TO ONE LINKAGE, IT WOULD NEVERTHELESS BE BENEFICIAL TO BE ABLE TO MAKE A CONCESSION ON AN ISSUE OF SUCH LOCAL IMPORTANCE AS THIS IN A CONTEXT AND AT A TIME OF OUR OWN CHOOSING INSTEAD OF SIMPLY AS THE

UNCOORDINATED END PRODUCT TO TRADE CONSIDERATION. THIS
ISSUE OF RUM DUTY IS OF COURSE IMPORTANT OT OTHER CARIB-
BEAN STATES AS WELL, PARTICULARLY JAMAICA AND BARBADOS,
SO IT IS POSSIBLE THAT POSITIVE ACTION AT A CHOSEN TIME
MIGHT IN FACT RELATE TO OURINTERESTS IN ONE OF THOSE
COUNTRIES RATHER THAN ONLY CONSIDERING TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO.
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